

Gorse Hall Primary and Nursery School



Preparing to Start School
Reception Class
2022/2023



Welcome **Gorse Hall Primary School and Nursery**. We look forward to your child joining us in September and to welcoming the whole family to our school community. We welcome back any of our Nursery children who are moving up. We will be working together to help your child learn and develop over the coming years.

As your child is about to start Reception Class this year, you may be wondering who has more anxiety about it - you or your child. The first day of school is significant in so many ways; your child is growing up and you know, even if your child does not, that it is the beginning of a long stretch of firsts.

So, what steps can you take to help them settle in? We hope that this booklet will help you find ways to support your child as they make this exciting step in their school life.



What if my child finds it hard to separate?

If your child is a little anxious, keep as calm and matter of fact as possible - **say when you will see them, in the afternoon.** Children who are distressed at separation usually settle very quickly. Do not linger; a kiss, a smile and a wave goodbye is sufficient. Take your cue from the staff and if you need reassurance that your child has settled then phone the school when you get home.

It is really important to say goodbye. The simplest of the steps, it's often the hardest to do. Young children crave routine. By giving your child something they can count on, they are more likely to come into school willingly. So come up with something that you do each time you say goodbye. Maybe it's a secret handshake or a special high-five. Whatever it is, make it something special between the two of you and make sure you do it every single time. Settle your child at an activity or with a staff member, tell your child you'll be back at the end of the day or session, and walk out the door. Don't delay, don't give "one more minute," or "just one more hug". By leaving without delay you're sending them the message that you trust the people you are leaving them with and that it is a safe and fun place to be.



Seesaw

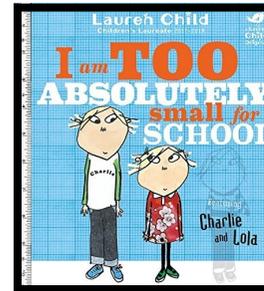
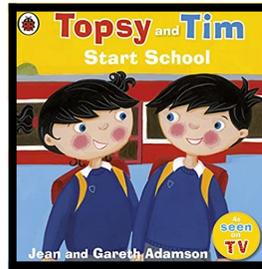
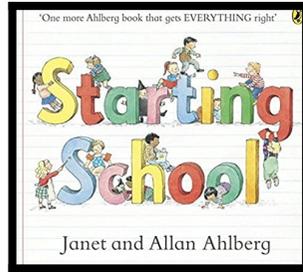
Our EYFS app [Seesaw](#) will at times send you notifications of your child's learning. Initially this will be more about them settling and showing them happy in the setting. It will then move away from this to become a record of their learning and development in other areas and also to show you how to further support learning at home. It is also a good way to contact your child's teacher with any concerns or questions.

Seesaw

Speak Positively About School

Put aside your own fears in front of your child and remain positive about the school experience. Even the most confident child may be put off going to school if they sense their parents' apprehensions about it. You may like to talk about when you were a young child at school. The friends you made, the things you liked best, the games you played, the teachers you remember. Maybe you can find a photo of you when you were at school to share.

Books that you could share about starting school



Reception Staff

RLP



Miss Pickering (Teacher)



Miss Heywood (LSA)

R



(Teacher)

Mrs Hammersley (LSA)

Get into a Routine

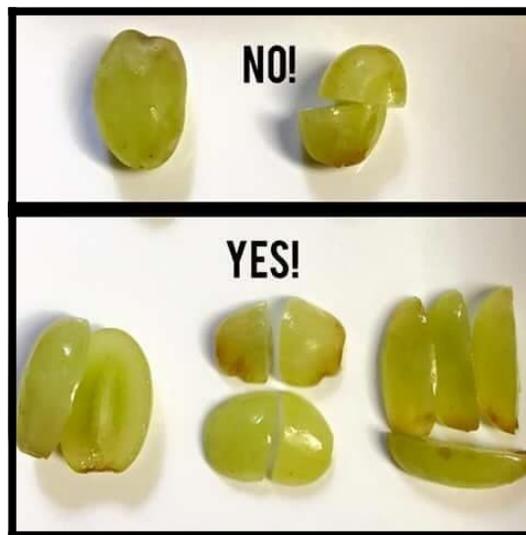
It is helpful to concentrate on simple practical things like explaining what your child will wear, which days they will come to school (Monday to Friday) and who will be picking them up. Children thrive on this kind of basic information and sometimes they need to hear the same answers more than once in order to feel safe and reassured.

Pointing out the structure and routines in a day at home helps to make school routines more familiar and less daunting, e.g. "Now it's our lunchtime and at school you'd be eating your lunch too". Please practise correct table manners and using a knife and fork. We put a great emphasis on children 'having a go' at trickier skills such as cutting food. Of course we will help when necessary to ensure no one goes hungry!

You can prepare your child by talking about the morning routine you will be following when school starts - getting washed and dressed, eating breakfast, checking bags are ready and so on. Let your child know who will be collecting them from school and please be on time.

All children in the infants (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) will get a piece of fruit at snack time and a school meal at lunchtime. This meal will be at no cost as the Government funds it. Children may alternatively bring a packed lunch from home and their own healthy snack.

Important: We ask that any grapes are cut in half in line with government guidelines on choking and also that children do not bring anything containing nuts (as we have children in school with nut allergies)



Never let them see you're upset. Don't let your child see that their separation anxiety is getting to you. Of course this is hard on you, but you must never let your child see it. Smile, talk about how much fun they're going to have and remember they may be listening to you even when they appear to be playing. Don't say how much you will miss them; keep it light and cheery. Stick to your good-bye routine and soon your child will be skipping in.

No bribes ! Bribing your child not to be sad may work temporarily but really who wants their child to 'pretend' to be happy just so they'll get a 'surprise' at the end of the day? It can be very tempting to offer a treat especially if your child is very upset and you feel a little embarrassed. The reality is, that within minutes of Mum/Dad leaving, most children happily settle down. Within days (sometimes weeks), the tearful goodbyes end. If a child is extremely distressed, we will always let you know and work together on strategies to improve things.

Try a change. Sometimes children find it easier to separate from one parent than the other. If your child suffers separation anxiety when Mum drops off, try getting Dad to give it a go, if possible, and see what results from that.

Alternatively if there's a relative or friend that is willing, let them handle the dropping off for a few days and see if there is a change in your child's behaviour.

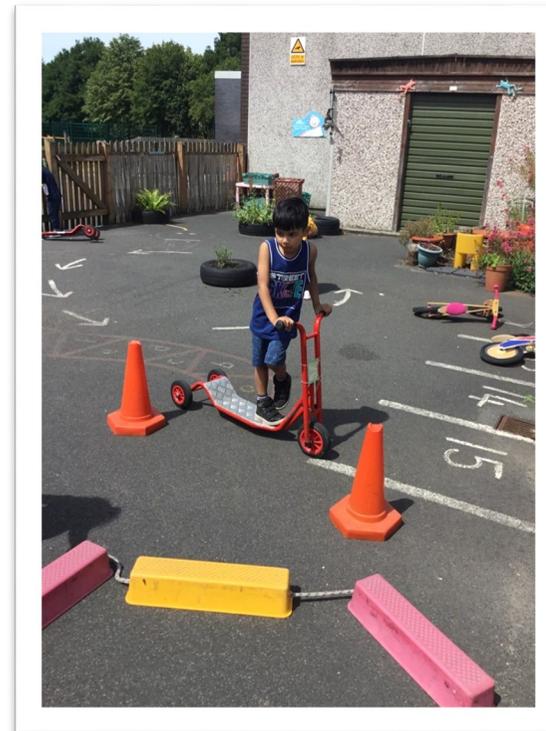


Try out the walk or drive to school and show your child where they will go in. You can consolidate this practical information by allowing your child to point out their new school to friends and grandparents as you go past.

Please help your child to recognise their name if they don't already. Most children can't read or write yet, but they may be able to spot the first letter of their name or even the whole thing. Put a name label on their bedroom door to help them learn it quickly.

Tiredness, particularly during the first term as children adjust to a new routine, is to be expected, so try to prepare for this by ensuring they are in a good sleep routine as they start school. In the weeks before they start school, attempt to establish a regular routine in the mornings to make sure they will get to school on time. Get up in the morning with plenty of time to get ready and eat a good breakfast. However, you should not expect your child to act in a 'more grown up way' because they are going to school. In fact, some children actually regress and may do things that you thought they had grown out of (e.g. wetting themselves or throwing a tantrum). This is a common reaction to starting school and will usually only be temporary. Try not to worry but let your child's teacher know if they are out of sorts. Don't keep them at home unless they are really too poorly to attend.

Please also keep us informed of any information that you feel that we need to know about home as this can be important in ensuring that your child feels happy at school.

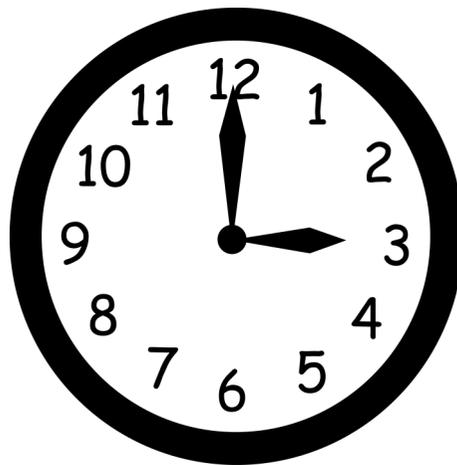


Try to be early for collecting your child in the first week or so. This will stop your child worrying when it is time to go home. **Don't be late** for pick up. It's easy to lose track of time when you have a few hours to yourself, whether you are shopping, catching up with friends, working or simply taking some time to relax. But no matter who is picking your child up, whether it is you or someone else, make sure you are there on time! If you are late, it can cause your child anxiety and make dropping them off the next time that much harder. It is helpful to keep the school number in your mobile phone and telephone to let the staff know if you even think you may be late. This way staff can assure your child they have not been forgotten but you are just running a little late.

It is also very important that if a different person is collecting your child that you ring the office or send a message via Seesaw or the MyEd app. For safeguarding reasons, children will not be allowed to leave with an adult unfamiliar to staff unless it is arranged.

Attendance and Punctuality

Regular attendance is vital for your child to make good progress and also for them to begin to love school. If children are late, they will miss the important morning phonics sessions and therefore arriving on time in the morning is essential.



Talk about any friends, siblings or cousins who've already started school or nursery and talk about the fun they're having. Discuss your child's interests and the things they will enjoy here - for example, "there'll be lots of sand to play with - you'll love that" or "there'll be story time". There will be enjoyable activities that build on things children are already doing at home or preschool - painting, drawing, cutting and pasting and listening to stories, for example. Children who have been to our Nursery already should be quite confident about their move into Reception Class but remind them about the positive things they have experienced and how much they will enjoy their new learning and their new teacher. Another strategy can be to play 'school' with teddies. If you can rope in other family members to join the game, it's even better.

Activities such as taking the register, show and tell, singing songs and counting are daily occurrences in school. It is very helpful for practising social skills, such as taking turns, following directions and making choices. Teaching simple chores that may be useful at school, such as tidying away toys, is invaluable as all children are expected to help out and be good team members in our school.



Special Needs,

If you have any concerns that your child may have special needs we are here to help support you. Miss Suleman (SENDCo) will be available to speak to parents who have such concerns. Equally we will invite you into school if we have any concerns so that we can provide the best support and advice necessary to help your child have a successful time at Gorse Hall.

Practical Preparations

We expect that all children will be **toilet trained** when they start school with us. It is helpful to link using the toilet at home to school, pointing out any small differences, 'Can you flush the toilet like you will at school?' Rest assured that any accidents will be dealt with sensitively and discreetly (hand washing is also essential)

We have spare underwear and clothes in school that should be laundered and returned. If your child has a bowel or another complex medical condition that affects their ability to self manage toileting you will need to speak to Miss Pickering (RLP) or (R) so that we can put things in place to support medical needs. At school, the children use a hot air dryer after they wash their hands. Please practise doing up buttons or zips and **fastening shoes**. Don't worry or pressure if this proves difficult at first - we are used to helping children in the early days.

Involve your child in the practical preparations such as the purchase and labelling of school bags and uniforms. Perhaps let them dress up and play in their uniform or PE kit so that you can explore with them the different thoughts and feelings they have about starting school. Grandparents and other proud family members can join in the excitement about starting school with a surprise photo or by email. This will make your child feel special and proud to wear our uniform. **We love to receive pictures of home achievements on Seesaw so please feel free to share these proud moments.**

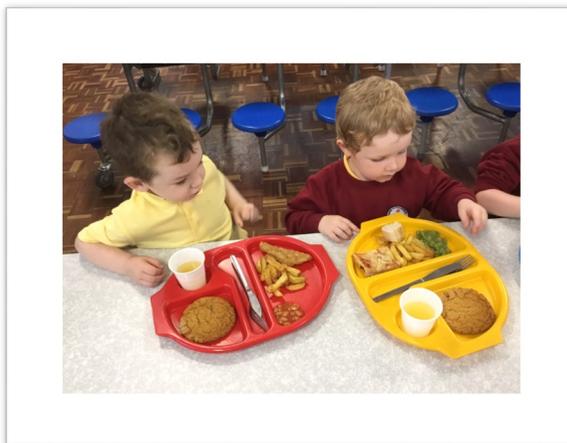
Parents as Partners

Once school has started, stay involved with your child's progression. Discuss the activities of the day and share books or games brought home from school. Please check your child's book bag everyday to keep it tidy and help you stay informed. Most parent communication in Reception will come through the apps **Seesaw** and **MyEd** so please check these regularly. Young children will often say they 'can't remember' when asked about their day! We are hoping that via the pictures and observations that you will receive through Seesaw, that you will experience a flavour of their school life .

If you want to find out about your child's day, don't ask complicated emotional questions. Children of this age simply do not have the emotional articulacy to express complex thoughts. Instead keep your questions simple and ask specific questions that can only be answered by giving examples. So rather than, "How was your day?" when they might say "Fine" as a response, try, "Who did you sit next to for lunch?", "Did you do any painting today?", "What was the best thing that happened today?"

Research has shown that the children of parents who work in partnership with their children's school make greater progress in their education. Ways to support your child include; following the School Uniform Policy, reading to and with your child, following the Behaviour Policy, attending Parents' Meetings and school events, reading our monthly newsletter, looking at our website www.gorsehall.tameside.sch.uk and our school blog and Facebook page.

Remember to always send your child to school every day with a drink and also their reading folder.



School Uniform (Sept to Easter Holidays)

- Sweat shirt or cardigan with our school badge
- Grey school skirt or trousers
- Yellow polo shirt (school badge optional on polo shirt)
- White, grey or black socks
- Black shoes with Velcro straps (no trainers)
- Long hair in a plait, bun or pony tail/s at all times

In the Summer term (After Easter Holidays) optional

- Red or yellow gingham dress
- Grey short trousers (to the knee)

No jewellery allowed apart from stud earrings (these must be removed for P.E)

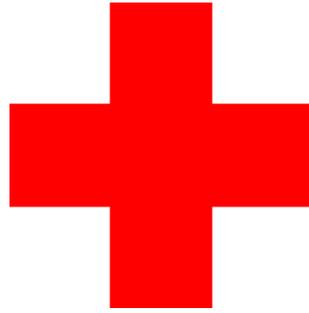
No nail polish or make up

No extreme haircuts are allowed for boys or girls

PE kit

- Black slip-on plimsolls
- White t shirt and black shorts/Plain black jogging bottoms (no logo)

Please label all items of clothing



Emergency Contact Details

It is essential that the school is able to contact a parent, relative or guardian of a child in case of an emergency. For this reason we require all parents to provide at least **two** up to date emergency contact addresses and telephone numbers. **Please let us know if your contact details change.** We also ask parents for their email address.

Medical Needs It is very important that the school has up to date information about your child's medical needs. If your child needs an inhaler or has regular medical needs there is a form to complete. Please ask the school office or class teacher. Blue inhalers should be in school at all times so ensure you have one for home too.

One last thing...

At Gorse Hall Reception class, we are dedicated to letting children learn by exploring in the environment. Children will be in the water, sand, paint, mud kitchen and experience lots of other messy things. If your child comes home messy at the end of the session, rest assured that they have enjoyed every second and have done some amazing learning along the way!

